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"Le Nozze di Figaro."—Mozart and Meyerbeer.

(From DWIGHT'S JOURNAL OF MUSIC, Dec. 25, 1858. Written after the first performance of "The Marriage of Figaro" in Boston.)

Our "Athens" could scarcely pass muster as a musical city so long as it remained a stranger to this world-famous opera. It was almost like living in ignorance of one of the best plays of Shakspeare;—an ignorance, in this case, converted into bliss for some two thousand people—the largest and most cultivated audience of the season—on Friday evening. It was perhaps well that we were forced to wait until this masterpiece of genius could be put before us with such completeness and fidelity. Its floating fragments of immortal melody, which have mingled themselves in all our lives more or less from childhood, could now be brought together in their original connection, in a live and perfect whole, that would not disappoint.

For our public it was one of the best of lessons to have two such works as the *Huguenots* and the *Nozze di Figaro* make their impressions on us in immediate succession. No two works could be in greater contrast; it was the most imposing type of the extreme modern tendency in music—the music of effect,—brought side by side with one of the perfect instances of the pure, spontaneous process of creative genius, in an opera which for three quarters of a century has held its place as "classical" for just that reason. It was the comparison of a gorgeous, grotesque, bewildering and exciting romance of a Victor Hugo or a Eugene Sue with anything as quiet, sweet and genuine as "As you like it." The advantages of the modern work are all external, on the outside, extrinsic, properly speaking, to pure musical inspiration; advantages of form and treatment, due to improved means and mechanism, rather than to vital quantity and quality of music; the advantage of imposing combinations, new orchestral coloring, the dramatic employment of masses on the stage, great stage effects, rare studied contrasts,—and above all, dramatic intensity of well chosen subject and ingeniously elaborated plot. Meyerbeer's vast combinations are built upon a minimum of melody. Musical thoughts, as such, do not seem to come unbidden with him. He has no unflinching fount of inspiration to draw from. He is blessed with few real melodies. His poetic or dramatic theme, when he has chosen it and reflected on it and filled his mind with it, does not take possession of him in such an intrinsically musical way as to become fused in his imaginative consciousness, and so transmuted into a spontaneous perfect flow of tones. On the contrary, armed with all technical skill and knowledge in the art, with a tenacious, comprehensive brain, he studies out appropriate and striking settings of each situation and each least phase of his text; he does this with consummate judgment, only always with prime reference to effect upon a public; determined first of all that it shall strike; for he is not that willing, consecrated votary to truth for truth's sake, that he can be content to hide a talent where only the divining rod of sympathetic understanding in a few shall own its presence. He will run no such risk. He will make less gold go farther. So he constructs us an immense romantic melodrama, in the literal sense of that word, a grand historical picture in music, splendidly illustrating all the scientific and material resources of our modern music, impressing us with a sense of power, startling us with contrasts, taxing our every faculty of attention, interesting us intensely for at least once, but wearying heart and brain, and making us feel that, after all, a violence has been done to the living peace and freshness of our souls, that we

have been subjected to a rude tumultuous stimulus *ab extra*, but have not tasted that divine refreshment, have not breathed that life-giving atmosphere of what is called *repose* in Art.

Now Mozart consciously attempts far less, but Mozart is unspeakably more, higher and finer than all that. For Mozart was a man of genius, one who wrought wholly by the spontaneous processes of genius. Melodies, fresh, beautiful, divine, such as are of no age, but in all ages speaking like a native language to all hearts, were his almost without the seeking,—so beautiful, that what he thought to utter in tones, came back to him a hundred times more beautiful and more significant than he had meant it:—ever the true poet's experience; and such surprises to oneself, probably, are just the only real poetry, and have the only right to go forth to the world as poems. The same, in the highest sense, with music.

The "Marriage of Figaro" is quite as genuine and Mozartean, but not as great a work as *Don Giovanni*. It is a lighter and an earlier effort—if such a felicitous creation can be called an effort. He had a lighter, nay an altogether poorer subject to deal with; one which lacked the supernatural and the tragic element afforded by the story upon which that crowning masterpiece of his complete musicianship was founded. What a plot indeed, for a nature so sincere as Mozart! Out of Beaumarchais' sceptical and sneering comedy, then all the rage, and even acquiring a certain consequence among the political signs of the times before the French Revolution by its smart satire on the unbelief and untruth of the whole social fabric,—a plot of miserable intrigues and tricks, in which every one of the eight or ten characters is intriguing against every other almost; a mesh of complicated love relations, in which each lover forfeits any interest you once begin to take in him, by showing himself insincere, jealous and at the same time false:—from such a picture of the prose side of life, Da Ponte made him the libretto. What was there in all this for one like Mozart? The characters, at least the principal ones, cannot interest us. They are in fact our old friends of the "Barber of Seville." The Count is Almaviva, and the Countess is Rosina, and Figaro, now on the eve of marriage, intrigues upon his own account to baffle the designs of the false Count upon his own pretty, bright Susanna, my lady's maid and confidant. Rossini, afterwards, brought just the right genius to the treatment of the first stage of this story. His music, so sparkling and facile, full of original and never failing melody, a music almost witty, delicious to hear, but never much in earnest, genial, but external, is in the very spirit of such comedy. Moreover, the libretto of the "Barber" is broad farce, lending itself more readily to comic music; whereas "Figaro's Marriage" is genteel comedy, abounding in the wit of conversation, hardly admitting of translation into anything so much sincerer and deeper as a Mozart's music must be. But therefore, and in spite of this, let us admire the genius of our dear Mozart all the more:—that he could transmute such a plot into so exquisite a musical midsummer's day.

He treats the subject in his own way, as he only could, by the necessity of his genius, which is perfect freedom. He is child enough, and has enough genuine zest of humor, to make the exquisite comedy of the thing sing itself out to very ecstasy, while, at the same time, Shakspeare-like, he is continually getting very much in earnest, and idealizing these sportive amours of a day in melodies that spring from the sincerest depths and soar up to the heavenliest heights of real love. Indeed it seems as if we felt in such an

opera of Mozart just the highest mission and symbolic sense of music:—the suggestion, through whatever low and common net-work of relations, of an ideal, pure, harmonic life; his music lifting every character to an unwonted sincerity; touching each emotion with a glow of holier inspiration; making these poor intrigues and alliances to typify a social whole of pure spontaneous spiritual interchange, entirely pure and free and vital,—a blessed after-world of innocence and love.

Look now at the characters and at their songs. Susanna, the fascinating, cunning, roguish, pretty lady's maid, could not, were she the liveliest of comediennees, act her part so humorously that the music would not lend a finer touch of delicacy and sparkle to it; her rapid recitatives are the ideal perfection of natural language; they are what talk might be with perfect organs in a perfect medium—"fits of easy transmission," as the electricians say. Then she is such a good sympathetic creature—so the music makes her—so kindly amused with little Cherubino's confessions. But Susanna really loves Figaro. And when on the eve of their union, after baffling the Count's designs, she sings *Deh vieni, non tardar*, can you conceive of any melody of love more heart-felt, pure and heavenly? Mlle. Piccolomini sang this with much fervor and beauty, while in the general presentation of the part, with all its archness, she was charming—thoroughly alive in all the action, (sometimes too much so), wearing the rhythmical chains of the music with most natural ease and grace. Her recitative was particularly neat and delicate; her small voice always musical and telling.

The Countess—(how changed from our Rosina, who is just what Rossini's music makes her, sparkling and charming, but external, without passion.)—is the one serious person of the play, though not above intrigue, and hardly interesting as the play-wright makes her. But what depth of longing tenderness, of sadness chased by gleams of golden hope, those lovely airs of hers reveal: *Porgi amor*, and *Dove sono!* Are there diviner melodies, unless you seek them also in Mozart? Mme. Ghioni appeared to better advantage in this part, although wanting in action and of marble coldness of features. She sang the music conscientiously, and with fair voice and expression, being greatly applauded in *Dove sono*. Her voice blended beautifully with Susanna's in the duet *Sul aria*, where she dictates the note,—a duet of such natural and unalloyed simplicity of melody, that the whole audience were entranced.

Let us thank Beaumarchais for giving Mozart a character so after his own heart, as the page Cherubino. What a charming part indeed! and Mme. Berkel had just the pretty figure for it, and enacted the bewitching boy to a charm. Her voice is thin, but her artistic conceptions were all good, and she sang with unction. He is a boy of some thirteen years, in whose breast the first vague stirrings of the master passion are just beginning to be felt, filling him with delicious and alarmed surprise. He finds every beautiful woman having a mysterious attraction for him, poor rogue; and the little songs he writes and sings to Susanna and his mistress: *Non so più cosa son*, and *Voi che sapete*, are his confessions, as serious and touching as they are delightfully comical. Oulibicheff sees in Cherubino Don Giovanni in the bud. By the music of the two operas this is quite transparent. Nay, we may go further and say, Cherubino is Mozart. But this thought we have no room to develop.

Figaro, now major-domo of the Count, has in Mozart's treatment a finer and more intellectual kind of humor than Rossini's barber. Besides,

he has an earnest side; he loves Susanna, and it is with an honest glow that he boasts his wits a match for those of the Count. How finely Mozart's music fits both sides of him! That dainty, cunning strain: *Se vuol ballare*, &c., is the melodic *notice* of the character. The song *Non più a dirai* is the prototype of Rossini's *Largo al Factotum*, and not reached by that. Formes sang and acted it to perfection, as indeed he did the whole part. Figaro also has a very earnest air in the last act, where he suspects Susanna; and where there is real passion Mozart, like a bounteous creator, is no respecter of persons, but gives him his best to sing; the servant now being as much man and having as much use for music as his lord.

Count Almaviva, baritone, the central personage in all this, stands for the dissolute vices of the great, exposed and satirized. But Mozart will not let a momentary, superficial passion end with that; it goes hard with him to give up the game; he finds that he is seriously in love with Susanna; the duet: *Crudel perché*, is one of the most touching and impassioned love strains; he is better than he would be in it, for love and music are divine when they are real. And in his soliloquy before the wedding, where he vents his chagrin at being thus outwitted by Figaro, Mozart has given him a grand aria, with splendid orchestral accompaniment, altogether in his most noble and dramatic style. Sig. Florenza sang his music well, with a rich and manly voice; and looked the Count well, in his quiet attitudes, but in the intense parts is given to strange crouching postures and grimaces.

Of the minor characters we can only say that the small part of Don Basilio, (the only tenor in the opera, strange to say,) was well done by Mr. Perring, so far as singing goes; and that Signora Morra, as Marcellina, Herr Mueller as the gardener, and Herr — as Dr. Bartolo were quite acceptable.

But the charm lay in the opera as a whole. Its concerted pieces are as fine as its songs; especially that septet finale of the second act. Mozart's finales are quiet and unpretending as compared with those of Meyerbeer or Verdi; but whereas these latter are most artificially imposing, a tenor and soprano shouting in unison, while other voices put in mere phrases of accompaniment, properly belonging to bassoon or contrabasso or what not in the orchestra, in Mozart's finales each voice sings in character, phrases which seem as positively dictated by the personal as by the contrapuntal complication. The chorus, it is true, he uses unambitiously; it is a chorus of peasants, and they sing peasants' music, natural and simple festive strains. How quaintly beautiful that dance music! But it is all one continuous and living whole; a world of heavenly music; and it all floats charmingly upon a summer sea of instrumentation, which is so full and delicious that one is tantalized by the desire to listen to the orchestra alone. Ever at the right moment, each turn of thought, or feeling, or situation is met at once, as if by heavenly accident, by just the fittest instrumental phrase that mortal brain could possibly invent. The orchestral accompaniments afford such felicitous and sympathetic background, that it is as if the whole world took the color of our own passing thoughts and moods.

The performance of the "Marriage of Figaro" in Boston must have made its mark, and will be productive of great good. It was "experiencing" music, as some say of religion.

Weber's "Oberon."

[From the able analysis, written by Dr. JAMES PECK, for the programmes of The Church Music Association, New York.]

Oberon, the Elf King, having quarrelled with his fairy partner, vows never to be reconciled to her till he shall find two lovers constant through all peril and temptation. To seek such a pair his "tricksy spirit," *Puck* has ranged in vain through the world. *Puck*, however, hears the sentence passed on *Sir Huon*, of Bourdeaux, a young Knight, who, having been insulted by the son of Charlemagne, kills him in single combat, and is for this condemned by the Monarch to travel to Bagdad, to slay him who sits on the

Caliph's left hand, and to claim his daughter as his bride. *Oberon* instantly resolves to make this pair the instruments of his reunion with his *Queen*, and for this purpose he brings up *Huon* and *Sherasmin*, asleep before him; enamours the Knight by showing him *Rezia*, daughter of the Caliph, in a vision; transports him at his waking to Bagdad, and having given him a magic horn, by the blast of which he is always to summon the assistance of *Oberon*, and a cup that fills at pleasure, disappears. Here *Sir Huon* rescues a man from a lion, who proves afterwards to be *Prince Babekan*, who is betrothed to *Rezia*. One of the properties of the cup is to detect misconduct. He offers it to *Babekan*. On raising it to his lips, the wine turns to flame, and thus proves him a villain; he attempts to assassinate *Huon*, but is put to flight. The Knight then learns from an old woman that the Princess is to be married next day, but that *Rezia* has been worked on, like her lover, by a vision, and is resolved to be his alone. She believes that fate will protect her from her nuptials with *Babekan*, which are to be solemnized on the next day. *Huon* enters, fights with and vanquishes *Babekan*, and having spell-bound the rest by the blast of the magic horn, he and *Sherasmin* carry off *Rezia* and *Fatima*. They are subsequently shipwrecked; *Rezia* is captured by pirates in a desert island and brought to Tunis, where she is sold to the Emir, and exposed to every temptation, but remains constant. *Sir Huon*, by the order of *Oberon*, is also conveyed thither. He undergoes similar trials from *Roshana*, the jealous wife of the Emir, but, proving invulnerable, she accuses him to her husband, and he is condemned to be burned on the same pile with *Rezia*. Here they are rescued by *Sherasmin* with the magic horn, *Oberon* appears with his *Queen*, whom he has regained by their constancy, and the opera concludes with Charlemagne's pardon to *Huon*.....

Weber's overtures, though they may be thought to be the first in point of estimation, were always the last in their production, for they take the chief characteristics from the Opera itself, leading the mind to embrace, as it were, the general action. This property it is, that makes them so acceptable to the public, not only in their proper place, but as Orchestral music. The overture to *Der Freischütz*, before we have seen the piece, raises trains of indefinitely wild images and emotions, stimulating the mind to wander in search of the meaning of such "mysterious harpings." When the Opera has been heard, the book lies open—the connection is manifest, and associations are established, as full of fiery shapes as the drama itself.

Of such a kind is the overture to *Oberon*. It is in D major, and opens the main subject of the piece at once by a solo for the horn, which forms the symphony of the vision of *Sir Huon*, and indeed gives the second title to the piece, being one of the great magical agents. This consists of five bars only, and a few notes lead to a short trait from the chorus of Fairies, taken by flauti, &c., which presents to us these wayward agents of the night. A martial strain from the movement played in the Court of Charlemagne (the last scene), introduces the hero, and we are to gather his success from the union of this passage with a part of the trio, which is sung before the lovers embark for Ascalon. These, with their transitions and a passage from *Rezia's* scena in the second Act, carry us on to *Puck's* invocation of the Spirits. Here we have the preternatural cause of the shipwreck and subsequent distresses of the lovers, portrayed to us, and these musical themes, variously wrought, form the rest of the overture, which concludes with the melody from *Rezia's* scena, and, like the story, happily. If we say that this composition does not equal the overture to *Der Freischütz*, it cannot, we presume, excite the least surprise, for when is the genius of the musician produced anything so darkly mysterious, so finely descriptive, so linked together by unity of plan and execution, so rich in its combinations, so powerful in its dominion over the soul? The overture to *Oberon* is certainly wonderfully original in conception, and gains upon us by repetition; but neither the traits of melody nor the harmonical combinations are sufficiently beautiful or frequent to enchain the mind of the hearer, like that earlier work with which it cannot escape comparison.

The piece itself opens with *Oberon's* bower. The stage is filled with "the pert fairies and dapper elves," who trip in such wild, yet soft and measured movement, that never do moonbeams fall on daintier Sprites. The music of this chorus is amongst the happiest conceptions in the Opera. The parts are syllabic and melodious, and the light strains for the dance intervene as symphonies. Nothing, certainly, can be more elegantly descriptive.

We cannot say as much for the song of *Oberon* ("Fatal Vow"). It portrays the anguish and dark passions which vex the spirit; but too darkly, as it seems to our notion of the subject, for a being so

shadowy and elvish. Nor are we particularly impressed with the Vision. It would be a simple melody, but is quaint, and appears rather the off-spring of thought than feeling. The first fairy chorus—"Honor and Joy to the True and the Brave"—is very effective. It is interspersed by solos for *Oberon* and *Sir Huon*; and one—"The Sun is Kissing the Purple Tide," for the former, has one of those traits of melody which are scattered like flowers on our path here and there. The chorus is at last wrought into an *allegro*, the fairies singing an incitation to *Sir Huon*, while the Knight has a separate subject (a bravura), running against the syllabic floral part. There are certainly both force and effect throughout. In the English edition of the work, there follows an *aria d'abilità*, written for Mr. Braham, which we must consider to be anything but worthy of the composer. To our ears, the introductory and concluding parts are noisy and vulgar. The andante, in the middle, is smooth; but cannot redeem the movements between which it stands. In his treatment of this song, Weber has adopted the syllabic method; and in this, we are told, Mr. Braham curiously indulged in the license of musical embellishment. It has, therefore, been decided to omit this scena, and to substitute that written for the German stage, which embodies one of the leading and most charming motivi in the overture.

The scena which follows for *Rezia* ("Yes, my Lord, my Joy, my Blessing!") is agreeable, though not, perhaps, of the highest cast. But there is a fault in this song which is common to the author. It is too long—repeats too much, and even where there is diversity, that diversity is not sufficiently varied. We have called this a Scena; but the air, in truth, is only the introduction to the *finale* of the first Act. A dialogue duet succeeds, in which the bass, by its mysterious movement, becomes the principal feature, and especially by the transition to G minor near the close, before the parts unite in the *allegro vivace*.

The melody of this may be accused of lacking the lightness and grace that render soprano duets effective. But in the choros which follows, the genius of Weber is to be recognized. The combinations to the words commencing,—

Fatima. Hark, lady, hark! on the terrace near, etc.

Rezia. Oh, my wild, exulting soul! &c.

are most judicious and striking.

The charm lies in the continual recurrence of a passage which appears with uncommon force in the various parts of the accompaniment. With this passage, it is to be observed, commences a transition, very finely brought in from the key of E flat to C natural. The soprano at the close has a separate melody, which is principal and brilliant, while the choral parts move on under it. The finale parts of this are among the happiest in the entire piece. The martial but sombre melody of the march is perfectly characteristic.

The subject as it proceeds, calls into more vivid action the pre-ter-natural agency which the composer delights to illustrate. The music, therefore, rises. It opens with a chorus, "*Gloria to the Caliph*," which commences in B minor, and changes afterwards very effectively into C major. It is also remarkable for its rhythmical iteration of two quavers and a crotchet, which conveys the accent almost throughout. It reminds us of a part of *Preciosa*, but is nevertheless very much of the same character as the preceding chorus, to which it bears an analogy, by being sung by the slaves of the Caliph. "*A Lonely Arab Maid*," a song for *Fatima*, consists of an *Andante* in E minor, and a movement in the major.

"*Over the dark blue waters*" is amongst the most attractive pieces in the Opera. The opening (*Allegro con grazia*) consists of two responsive solos in duet, first for the bass and tenor, and secondly for the soprano. Its style accords with the marginal direction, for it is at once free and graceful, with an originality in the structure of the passages, that interests the ear while it engages the attention. When the four parts come in, it rises to the more animated movement, which is taken as the principal subject of the Overture, and which here, in its first natural position, is very exhilarating. In the rolling bass passage towards the end, Weber gives a strong proof of his regard to instrumental effects—for it occurs to us that many composers would have transferred so much of it, as the voice could execute, to the vocal part.

We now arrive at a portion of the Opera, where, it may be literally said, appear those "fiery shapes" which have formed the delight and fame of the composer. The scene is the invocation of *Puck* to the Spirits, whom he summons to raise a storm and sink the vessel in which the lovers are embarked. It begins with a recitation, more powerful than the general tenor of Weber's writing in this species. Then follows an *allegro pesante*, commencing with the following lines:

Whether ye be in the cavern dark,
Lighted alone by the diamond spark, etc.

The musical effect is drawn from the modulation, which is unusually frequent. But when the *Spirits* answer the call, the stage, nay, earth and air seem to be peopled with ideal shapes. The mountain which forms the entire flat (to use a theatrical phrase) at the back, is divided into countless cells, from which issue all the pigmy inhabitants, while the stage itself is filled with the airy creation of the spirits of other elements. The movement is a rapid *presto*, but the vocal parts are syllabic. There are one or two striking proofs of the character of deep thought, which are so peculiar to Weber. To the demand,

We are here! we are here!
Say, what must be done? etc.

Puck replies—

Nay, nay, your task will be at most
To wreck a bark upon this coast, etc.

The *Spirits* answer—

Nought but that? Ho, ho, ho, ho!
Lighter labor none we know.
Winds and waves obey the spell!
Hark! 'tis done! Farewell! farewell!

The passage that we would cite is the first line, "Nought but that." Upon these words Weber has put all the orchestra and the singers into unison, obviously to display the simplicity and easiness of the allotted task—and again in the words,

Winds and waves obey the spell,

the voices are in unison, and in slow protracted notes, each occupying a bar, to declare the solemnity of the purpose, while the trembling of the instruments conveys the first effect, as it were, of the agency upon the surrounding objects. This is certainly very masterly and very expressive. The storm then rises, and the orchestra is made the vehicle of the elementary confusion. Like the sea bird in the tempest, the composer seems to delight in the flash of the lightning, the roar of the thunder, and the heavings of the ocean, while he rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.

The lovers must now be considered as shipwrecked on a desert island, and we have first a most expressive, beautiful tenor solo, the Knight's prayer for aid. (No. 1, "Ruler of this awful hour.") Next (No. 2) comes *Rezia's* famous *Scena*, "Ocean, Thou Mighty Monster," constructed on the same general plan with *Agatha's* in the *Freyshütz*, and well worthy to be ranked with it. As descriptive music (not imitative music—an important distinction, often forgotten), it is almost unrivalled. Justice can be done it only by a voice of great compass and power, inspired by a degree of intelligence and feeling unhappily rare; and every measure of the orchestral work is a study. Immediately after the *Scena*, the heroine will be understood to be suddenly abducted by a crew of circumambient pirates, who were cruising in the very bark which she had welcomed (in her final *Allegro*) as coming to her rescue. They carry the lady off, to be sold as a slave to the *Emir of Tunis*, having first cut down and overpowered *Sir Huon*. To him appears the *Fairy King*, who throws him into a magic slumber, for his more convenient transportation to the same Saracen City. The "Mermaid's Song" (No. 3) follows. As it does not advance the business of the drama a single step, we must suppose that it is sung to give pleasant color to *Sir Huon's* dreams. But we are too thankful for so delicate and spiritual a melody to inquire into its "raison d'être." Had either Shelley or Coleridge been a composer, he would have written something like it. Mendelssohn has, very adroitly, borrowed from it one of the loveliest phrases in his *Midsummer Night's Dream* Overture. This beautiful *Aria* leads up to a *Duet* for Puck and Oberon, "Master, say our toil is o'er," and a brilliant *Chorus of Mermaids and Fairies* (No. 4) which, though characteristic of Weber, have something of the sparkling clearness that is peculiar to Auber's best music.

Opera plots are seldom remarkable for lucidity or coherence, and the plot of Oberon is no exception to the rule. So we shall not attempt to set forth its complications in detail. Suffice it to say, that we next find *Sir Huon's* Squire (*Scherasmin*) and *Rezia's* confidante (*Fatima*) transported, somehow, to Tunis, and living happily together as slaves of a certain citizen of that town. Their semi-comic music, though admirably suited to the stage, is omitted, because it might fall flat in the concert-room. *Sir Huon* is sent up through a magic trap-door to join them, by the infallible Puck. *Rezia* is brought to Tunis by her pirates. Knight, squire, and confidante unite in a lovely *terzetto* expressing their determination to rescue her (No. 5). Meanwhile, the *Emir's* wife, or Queen, having fallen desperately in love with *Sir Huon*, endeavors to win his affections, and brings her whole corps of Saracen Ladies of Honor to bear upon him, but he remains true to *Rezia*. Their *Chorus* for

Soprani and Alti (No. 6) is wonderfully fresh and brilliant, without a trace of the unhealthy sentiment with which sundry more recent composers would have defiled it. The scene is interrupted by the *Emir* himself. He condemns *Sir Huon* and also *Rezia* (who "drops in" opportunely) to instant death. They are saved, of course, by Oberon's horn, which sets the *Emir* and all his myrmidons dancing in spite of themselves, and so enables the lovers to make their escape. Next comes a very splendid *March* (No. 7), in fact, a kind of *intermezzo*, to give time for the changes of scenery, &c., required by the *Finale* of the Opera, when *Sir Huon* fulfils his pledge by presenting himself with his bride before *Charlemagne*; and this *March* reproduces, in new forms, some of the loveliest phrases of the Overture. The final *Chorus* (No. 8), "Hail to the Knight!" might have been written for a *Gloria in Excelsis*. Indeed, there is little really fine, grave, and earnest music in opera, symphony, or sonata, that does not embody, in substance, the sentiment of words to be found somewhere in the Liturgy and Offices of the Church.

Oberon was its composer's last work of magnitude. It was brought out in London, 12th April, 1826, and received with enthusiasm. Weber died on the 5th of the following June. All his great works were therefore produced within only four years. The *Freyshütz* was first played in Berlin, 1822; the exquisite little Gipsy Opera, *Preciosa*, at Dresden, in the same year; and *Euryanthe*, at Vienna, in 1823.

Oberon proves that the composer died too young, and that the resources of his genius were still unexhausted. Comparisons, we know, are odious; but in command of musical language, and in variety, this Opera seems to rank above the *Freyshütz* itself, though the latter, because of the unusual intelligibility of its plot, and a certain fragrance, as of the forest and the mountain glen, with which it is permeated, will always be the more popular of the two.

Wagner on Conducting.

FROM FERDINAND HILLER'S Musical Letters.

Some time since, Richard, the Wagnerite, hurled, from his high and holy see in Switzerland, an anathema against the Jews; in his latest bull it is the higher and lower musical clergy who, for their boundless depravity, are laid under interdiction. There are, it is true, plenty of heretics among them who do not believe in the infallibility which their prosecutor claimed for himself immediately he had left the Gymnasium. The schism which, in consequence, has been in course of development for a period of years, will not, however, be productive of any serious dangers either to Church or State.

The bull in question, *Ueber das Dirigiren* (On Conducting), affords any reader not concerned in the matter the diversion of a sort of Dante like walk through hell—innumerable sinners suffer the most terrible of all punishments, such punishments, indeed, as even Dante himself never beheld: they are annihilated, struck out utterly from the book of the living. For who could ever live and work on, if Wagner had once pronounced his condemnation?

Joking apart, Wagner has published another pamphlet, bristling with examples of incorrectness and of injustice. Stupid young louts, on whom any one may impose, if he unites with a little cleverness a great deal of impertinence (p. 67), will regard it with amazement. More sensible people will say that it contains a certain amount of truth. But when a man runs everything down, he must, in this imperfect world of ours, be sometimes right. I know nothing so beautiful as to be without its weak points—not even woman—not even Wagnerian music is free from them.

The train of thought (?) in the pamphlet is somewhat as follows:—Conducting has hitherto been left "to be carried out by routine, and to be judged by ignorance." (No examples are adduced—we might mention Spontini, Weber, Spohr, or Mendelssohn). The manner in which music is presented to the public is not, however, a matter of indifference, since, naturally, it is only by means of a good performance that the public can derive a correct impression of a musical work. (Very naturally!) According to Wagner, everything connected with this matter is in a very bad state in Germany, a result attributable "most of all to the prejudicial qualities of the conductors." The old German *Capellmeister* "properly so-called," were "sure, strict, and more especially gruff, but respected." These gentlemen were, however, as far as regards training of the orchestra "for complicated modern orchestral music, unfitted for their task, and did not do what they should have done towards properly re-enforcing the orchestra, especially in the quartet." But they had "a sufficient justification in the hitherto mode of instrumentation, followed by Italian operatic composers, whose works were more highly esteemed than those of any one

else, even by the Intendants of the large theatres, in consequence of the creditable taste of their respective Courts." Succeeding conductors did not, however, do any better. How should they? They generally reached their "good posts" (?) by simply moving up, "by shoves," or, sometimes, by "the protection of some princess's waiting-woman, etc." They necessarily were "altogether destitute of merit in consequence of their unworthy servility towards their ignorant chief, and their lazy musicians, but this was the very thing by which they raised themselves into universal favor." In more recent times (Heaven only knows how many more recent and most recent times there are, according to Wagner) conductors, also, were "berufen."*

"These are our Music Bankers of the present day, who have sprung from the school of Mendelssohn, or been recommended to the world by his patronage." Such individuals possess intelligence, good tone, and have, moreover, done something for the "elegant style of performance." "But the first thing in which these gentlemen are deficient, is that energy which can be given only by self-confidence reposing upon strength really their own. For, in this case unfortunately, everything: vocation, talent, education, nay faith, love, and hope, is artificial." To these more modern conductors belong, strange to say, above all, Meyerbeer and Mendelssohn themselves, who did not do as much as they ought to have done in Berlin. "Why did their strength desert them? It would seem, because they really possessed no strength. Then how must matters stand with their shadowy imitators?"

Wagner declines to enter minutely, for the present, into what has been effected by conductors who busy themselves with opera, "because the latter—and they derive a mournful right to act as they do from the miserable manner in which this branch of art is cultivated in German theatres—is regarded as an obnoxious daily task to be performed with sighs." He takes his instances from the concert-room where he never experienced any save unsatisfactory impressions. It was "from the singing of Schröder-Devrient" that he "derived his best notions with regard to the tempo of Beethoven's music, and the style in which it ought to be played." Another sublime revelation was vouchsafed him by the performance of the Ninth Symphony in Paris. The tempo, in the fullest acceptance of the word, is for him "the foundation on which a good performance is based, but who recognizes the fact?" Wagner has, it appears, suffered the most mournful treatment as regards his own music, and the various instances of this are narrated in the most exhaustive manner. Thus, though the prelude to *Die Meistersinger*, when he himself conducted it, entranced a small number of friends at Leipzig, it was destined under Reinecke's conducting-stick, to be hissed at the Gewandhaus. The time of this piece, together with the overture to *Der Freischütz*, and a few observations upon the mode of performing the Symphonies of Beethoven, and even (*mirabile dictu*) of Mozart and Haydn, are the vehicle by which he explains his views on conducting, the said views consisting principally in the opinion that an *Adagio* must be sung with a deal of tone; that an *Allegro* must have fire infused in it; and that a tempo intended to be quiet must not be scampered through—and culminating in the assertion that the correct manner of performing modern works (Weber's overtures, for instance) "does not consist in a stubborn adherence to the time, but in doing justice to the separate parts, which frequently contrast with each other."

"Dragging," Wagner goes on to say, "is not the characteristic of the elegant conductor, but scampering through and hurrying a piece is." This again results from the influence of Mendelssohn.

"Si Cain a tué son frère,
C'est la faute de Voltaire."

Poor, poor Mendelssohn! Wagner is unable to stomach him, and we can easily understand why. But what can we say to the following? "Referring to conducting, he told me personally, on several occasions," Wagner states, "that too slow a tempo was worse than any other, and that he himself always recommended that the tempo should be taken a little too fast; that a really good performance, however, was always something unusual; but that the conductor could deceive his audience by only taking care that not much of the performance was heard, and this was best effected by not remaining long over it, but getting quickly through it." Any person who had only a superficial acquaintance with Mendelssohn, can imagine the way in which he advanced jokes of this sort.

* *Berufen* signifies "Invited, summoned;" also, "having a call, a vocation." In which sense Herr Wagner employs the word, I leave the reader to decide. The effort of doing so will afford him much amusement, if he is fond of riddles.—TRANSLATOR.

We can imagine, also, his look, when Wagner, with his ceaseless flow of language, talked to him about the right tempo of one of Beethoven's minuets; and when Wagner "seemed as though he was looking into a perfect abyss of superficiality, on a complete void," he perceived only the mere shadow of the impression which the composer of *Rienzi* must have produced on the composer of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. I myself, unfortunately, had but few opportunities of becoming acquainted with Mendelssohn as a conductor. But the supremely conscientious artistic carefulness which was inherent in him, and which grew to be a sort of religion, is apparent in the smallest of his songs. If, now and then, he took the tempo quicker than others would have considered appropriate his fiery temperament probably caused him to do so. Certain pianoforte pieces, too, of his own, he played at a demoniacally rapid rate, but correctly and beautifully notwithstanding—and so, most assuredly, he expected from his orchestra only what it could completely master, and what he himself felt was true and right.

It is not to be denied that, in certain particulars, relating more especially to the mode of performing Beethoven's Symphonies, Wagner is correct in his assertions; but he is mistaken in believing that we must have recourse to the oracle at Lucerne, to learn these things. The bombastic fastian, in which he frequently envelops the simplest observations, is insupportable, while his self-glorification frequently becomes downright ridiculous. "Perhaps I am the only conductor," he exclaims, "who has ventured on reading the *adagio*, properly so called, of the third movement in the Ninth Symphony with due regard to its pure character as well as other things." Perhaps others, my respected Herr Wagner, venture to do the same thing, and perhaps they succeed in the attempt.

Despite all the "ignorance and insipidity of the musicians into whose hands the destiny of musical matters in Germany, and the utter indifference of German art-officials have allowed the conduct of high German musical interests to lapse, and who now feel secure in their places and dignity," there are some 'really besung as martyrs of pure classical music.' These Wagner proceeds to subject to a somewhat strict investigation. In the case of some he finds "squint-eyed envy united with helplessness;" in that of others, "honest intellectual narrowness, becoming dishonest from anger only." In the modern camp there is "a great deal to be concealed, and a great deal that should not be observed." We find in it "*Gebildetheit*,"* but no "education," and consequently a want of "true intellectual freedom," which held even Mendelssohn "for the earnest contemplator, beyond the pale of what belongs to our German art." (!!) "These elegant musical leaders interdict themselves from giving the reins to their "*Gebildetheit*," because they knew it could lead as far as Offenbachian scandal," and a deal more nonsense of the same kind."

*"Perhaps the German neologism "*Gebildetheit*" may be rendered by a somewhat similar barbarism: "Educatedness" in English—and perhaps it may not. I again leave the matter entirely in the hands of the riddle-loving reader.—TRANSLATOR.

Wilhelm Friedemann Bach.

The immortal Joh. Seb. Bach left as an inheritance to the musical world ten sons, all of them more or less great artists and celebrated composers. His eldest and favorite son, Wilhelm Friedemann, was the only one who had the desire, till his melancholy death, to emulate his distinguished father. Wilhelm Friedemann was born in 1710 at Weimar, and died in 1741 in Berlin. Instructed by his father, he developed in earlier years his great abilities and talents as a performer on the piano and organ, and also in the theory of music, to such a degree that everybody admired him, and Father Bach himself, who was not so easily satisfied, looked forward to the highest results of his favorite son. His compositions were vigorous and profound, and he executed his musical inspirations on both instruments with a mastery which took every one by surprise. His diligence in the sciences, also, which he pursued at the "Thomas Schule" at Leipzig, was cherished by his tutors with great expectations. After leaving the college he studied the law and mathematics—the latter science he preferred, and adhered to it under all circumstances to the end of his life. In 1733 he received a vocation as organist at the Church of St. Sophia at Dresden. In 1747 he was appointed director of music and organist at the church of St. Mary at Halle, on the Saale. After this appointment he was known and called "The Bach of Halle," "Der Hallesche Bach." But this, also proved no place of abiding for him; he resigned in 1767, and returned to Leipzig without an engagement. His life at this period became a restless and fugitive one. Notwithstanding

he was nominated Chapelmaster to the Grand Duke of Hesse Darmstadt, he never obtained an active appointment at the Court. Living as a private individual, sometimes at Brunswick, Göttingen, and Berlin, he died at the last named town, on the 1st of July, 1784, in poverty and total debility.

In looking at his character we cannot be surprised to learn his sad fate. All distress he brought upon himself by his rudeness of mind, his inflexible and artistic pride, his prodigious absence of mind, and his peevish and quarrelsome disposition. Given to drinking, he violated as a civil citizen all order, and broke their privileges very often. With such defects the greatest genius could not prosper. His father's unassuming and modest mind turned in him to pride, and instead of improving his talent with efficacy he relapsed, and when inspiration failed he tried to replace it by strong drink. Altogether he presented the picture of a modern proletarian artist; and highly endowed as he was, yet the proud hopes and great expectations his father and brothers cherished in him, alas, perished. His contemporaries have acknowledged him to have been one of the greatest organ performers and fuguists, and also one of the profoundest literati in the science of music in Germany. His excellent brother, Philipp Emanuel, asserts of him that only he was able to replace his father, Joh. Seb. Bach—the highest praise that could be bestowed upon him; but nevertheless he was despised by the public in general, entirely through his own faults. From his earliest days he gave signs of absence of mind, which he would have been excused for in later years, under the plea of being absorbed in his art, if he would have restricted himself, which he never made any attempt to do. The consequence was the circulation of a great number of very amusing anecdotes, which, however, turned out very seriously for him. During my residence in Berlin to study under Professor Zelter, who was personally acquainted with the brothers Wilh. Friedemann and Phil. Emanuel Bach, the professor often spoke of their fine compositions and exquisite performances on the piano and the organ, to which he had listened and when in good humor related traits of Wilh. Friedemann's absence of mind. Some of the following anecdotes I relate as told by Professor Zelter:—Friedemann being obliged to go out on business, and expecting during his absence the visit of a friend, wrote with chalk in large letters on his door that he would be at home at such and such a time. Returning earlier than he anticipated he knocked at his door, read his own handwriting, and went away to abide the fixed time. He called one evening on his friend, Joh. Fred. Doles, and not finding him at home sat down and ate his supper, which stood on the table, and put the knives and forks afterwards in his pockets. His friend coming home later, and seeing his repast gone, said to him that he hoped he had enjoyed the supper. He seriously denied it till convinced through the knives and forks neeping out of his pocket. As organist in Halle he very often forgot to go to church, and when his landlady reminded him that it was time, as the church bells were already ringing a long time, he went, entered the church at one door and left it by another, to go home again to resume his fantasias on the piano. Once on Whitsunday he made up his mind not to be behindhand with his duties, and went early to church and seated himself in one of the pews, with the keys of the organ in his pocket. In the meantime the congregation assembled, but he remained there sitting long after the church was filled, and every one was expecting the organ prelude; at last the congregation became impatient, looking up to the organ; he did the same, and tossing up his head exclaimed, "I wonder who will play the organ to-day." Sometimes, when in good spirits, he played on the organ very long during Divine service, and once, being reprimanded for it by the elders of the church, threw up his appointment, preferring to live in the greatest poverty. Leaving Leipzig with a small bundle under his arm, containing all he possessed, he fell in with a merry company of strolling musicians from Prague, and became one of the party. Near Brunswick they made a call upon a rich proprietor of an estate, who was a lover of music and an admirer of Ph. Em. Bach. The major domo told them to perform in their best style as his master had a celebrated artist as a visitor. Having played some pieces, Friedemann seated himself at the piano and played magnificently. At once a voice called out, "this must be my brother Friedemann or the devil." The brothers embraced, and Friedemann cried like a child for joy that his brother had recognized him by his playing.

Notwithstanding the high estimation he held his brother Emanuel in, they disagreed, Friedemann's morose behavior estranging from him his best and sincerest friends. Both brothers remained strangers till death. His brother Christian, called "the Bach of London" ("Der Londoner Bach"), hated and des-

pised him. Stubbornness and drunkenness made his great and superior abilities unserviceable. When drunk he did nothing at all, and when sober he disliked composing, and preferred to extemporize on the piano, or to indulge in useless and sophistic disquisitions. This is the reason that only a small number of his works are known. Those published are— a Sonata in E flat major, Halle, 1739; Sei Sonate per Cembalo—the first in D major, Dresden, 1745. The other five remained unpublished. He advertised many of his compositions, but the public, who did not like him, gave no support to his undertakings. Other works composed by him are—a Treatise on the Common Chord; 14 Polonaises; 8 Fughettes; Music to the Advent Season; 5 Concertos for the Piano; 4 Fugues for the Organ with two Man. and Ped.; two Sonatas for two Pianofortes Concertante; Music for Whitsuntide; "Lasset uns ablegen," with Hautboys, Trumpets, and Cimbales.

His published and unpublished works are exceedingly scarce, and the musical public is greatly indebted to Mr. J. W. Davison for his spirited undertaking, in having edited, under the title, "Revivals," two beautiful fantasias of Wilh. Friedemann Bach, works which speak for themselves, and which not only advance the refinement of the divine art of music, but also restore our great ancient masters to the stage they must occupy if the better taste for music should predominate. Mr. Duncan Davison has published them in a superior and elegant style, giving homage to the great composer. Lastly, we cannot bestow enough praise upon Mme. Goddard, our unrivalled English performer on the piano, for the rendering and conception she has devoted to these two compositions, worthy her interpretation, which will give her the satisfaction of being the first to bring this distinguished composer (after having been so long a time nearly forgotten) again before the public.

DR. FERDINAND RAHLES.

—*London Mus. World.*

Music Abroad.

London.

A WEEK OF MUSIC.—The present week deserves a notable place in the history of the season. It has been surfeited with music, as though concert-givers had resolved upon bringing all their force to bear upon it. In proof, let us just run through the record—beginning with the operas.

At Covent Garden on Monday, *Don Giovanni* was performed, with Mme. Patti as Zerlina, and Mlle. Tieffens as Donna Anna. On Tuesday, Mme. Pauline Lucca appeared, as Marguerite in *Faust*. On Thursday the opera was *La Sonnambula*, with Mme. Patti as the heroine: on Friday *La Favorita* was given; and for to night *La Figlia del Reggimento* is announced. Adding to these five performances the four given at Drury Lane, we have to mention *Faust* on Monday, with Mlle. Rehoux as Marguerite; *Lucia* on Tuesday, serving for the first and welcome appearance of Mlle. Christine Nilsson; and on Thursday Mozart's *L'Osca del Cairo* and Weber's *Abou Hassan*. It will be remembered that these novelties were set down for performance two weeks ago, and that they were twice postponed—as though the Fates were determined upon doing their part towards the musical congestion under which the week now closing has labored. Of course the operas are none the less welcome because deferred; it would have proved better for them, nevertheless, had they come at some other time. Finally, as regards the lyric drama, we have to state that *Robert le Diable* is announced for to night, with Mlle. Nilsson as Alice—first time in England. Here, then, are nine operas, a number which should leave small margin for concerts. Concerts, however, have followed each other in quick succession, as though their rivals counted for nothing. Let us pass them in review.

On Monday the Philharmonic Society gave its fourth concert, whereat were played two symphonies (Haydn in D, and Beethoven in F, "Pastoral") two overtures (*Oberon* and *Le Siège de Corinthe*), with Schumann's pianoforte concerto in A minor.

On Tuesday *The Prodigal's Return*, a new oratorio by the Rev. H. F. Limpus, Minor Canon of St. George's Chapel, first saw the light in St James Hall. We may have to speak about this work in detail, and criticism in a mere enumeration would be out of place. Enough that the music leaves one in no doubt as to the source whence Mr. Limpus obtained his inspiration. Handel is the composer's model, and considering what models find most favor just now, we congratulate him on his choice.

On Wednesday, *Rebekah*, a scriptural idyll in two scenes, the work of Mr. Joseph Barnby, was brought out in St. James's Hall, along with Handel's *Alce-*

der's Feast. Here, again, we have to resist a temptation to be critical. It must, nevertheless, be said that Mr. Barnby did not go to Handel for his inspiration, and that the music was well performed and well received. Also on Wednesday took place the annual concert of Mr. Walter Bache, a gentleman who is in the forefront of English adherents to the spasmodic modern school, and who very consistently fills his programme with the spasms of modern composers. Much of a doubtful, or rather not doubtful, sort was done on the present occasion: and we sincerely hope that those present were able to bear up cheerfully against it. Also, on Wednesday, Mr. Henry Leslie gave the first concert of his "summer series," and should have had the co-operation of Mlle. Christine Nilsson. Unhappily, that favorite artist was too ill to appear: but her place was taken by Mme. Sinico. Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, and a selection vocal and instrumental—including Mendelssohn's pianoforte Concerto in G minor, magnificently performed by Mme. Arabella Goddard and the orchestra—was presented to a large and fashionable audience.

On Thursday there was no concert of importance, and on Friday nothing of more moment than certain "benefits" took place. The week ends this afternoon with the first Crystal Palace summer concert.—*Mus. World*, May 14.

CRYSTAL PALACE. The following Compositions have been performed in the Twenty seven Concerts of the Winter Season, 1869-70. Those with an asterisk prefixed were played for the first time.

SYMPHONIES.—Beethoven—No. 1, in C; No. 2, in D; No. 4, B flat; No. 5, C minor; No. 6, Pastoral; No. 7, in A; No. 8, in F. *Sterndale Bennett*—*G minor. *Coven*—*No. 1, C minor. *Hiller*—*Approach of Spring. *Haydn*—Oxford; in C. *Mozart*—*In D (Prague). *Mendelssohn*—Reformation; Scotch. *Schumann*—No. 4, in D minor; The Rhine. *Schubert*—Tragic; B minor. *Spohr*—Historical.

OVERTURES AND ORCHESTRAL PIECES.—Beethoven—In C (Namensfeier); Egmont; Leonore, No. 3; Coriolan; Leonore, No. 1; Prometheus. *Mozart*—Nozze di Figaro; Idomeneo; Magic Flute; Impresario. *Schubert*—Entr'acte and Ballet Air in Rosamunde; *Freunde von Salamanka; Rosamunde; Alfonso and Estrella. *Mendelssohn*—Midsummer Night's Dream (twice); Fingal's Cave; Trumpet in C; Ruy Blas; *Ottet in E flat; Son and Stranger; Athalie; Meeresstille; Melusine; *Ballet Airs, Camacho. *Schumann*—Genoëva; Scherzo from Overture, Scherzo and Finale; Manfred. *Weber*—Der Freischütz; Oberon; Euryanthe; Preciosa; Jübi-lee, *Cherubini*—Medea; Anacreon; Deux Journées. *Berlioz*—*Les Francs Juges. *Raff*—*Adagietto and Scherzo. *Rossini*—Siege of Corinth; William Tell; Semiramide. *Adam*—*Giralda. *Gounod*—Airs de Ballet (Reine de Saba). *Reinecke*—*Overture, Entr'acte, and *Ballet Music, King Manfred. *Rubinstein*—*Adagio and Scherzo. *Godsky*—*Golden Legend. *Sullivan*—In Memoriam; Sapphire Necklace. *Auber*—La Circassienne; Masaniello. *Gade*—Michel Angelo. *Herold*—Zampa. *Wagner*—Prelude to Lohengrin.

CONCERTOS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTAL SOLOS.—Beethoven—Pianoforte Concerto, E flat (Mr. Hallé); No. 1, C major (Herr Reinecke); Romance for Violin and Orchestra (Mme. Norman Neruda); Andante in F, for Pianoforte; Allegro from Violin Concerto (Mr. Carrouas). *Weber*—Concerto for Pianoforte in E flat (Mr. Paner); Concertstück for Pianoforte, F minor (Mme. Schumann). *Mendelssohn*—Pianoforte Concerto, G minor (Mme. Auspitz-Kolar); Rondo Brilliant, E flat, Pianoforte and Orchestra (Miss Zimmermann); Concerto for Violin (M. Sainton); Organ Sonata, No. 1, F minor (Mr. Archer); Organ Sonata, No. 4, B flat (Masters Le Jeune); Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 14 (Mme. Schumann). *Bach*—Prelude and Fugue, Organ (Mr. Archer); *Organ Prelude and Fugue, S. Ann's (Master Le Jeune); *Violin Prelude in E. *Bennett*—*Caprice in E (Op. 22) for Pianoforte and Orchestra (Mme. Goddard). *Benedict*—*Fantasia for Pianoforte on Der Freischütz (Mme. Goddard). *Max Bruch*—*Violin Concerto (Herr Joachim). *Schumann*—Pianoforte Concerto in A, Op. 54 (Mme. Schumann). *Vieuxtemps*—Adagio and Rondo (Mme. Norman Neruda). *Ries*—*Adagio and Rondo for Violin and Orchestra. *Piatti*—*Concerto for Violoncello.

VOCAL WORKS.—Handel—Acis and Galatea. *Rossini*—*Messe Solennelle. *Mendelssohn*—Lobgesang; Walpurgis Night. *Beethoven*—Mount of Olives; Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage. *Macfarren*—May-Day. *Sullivan*—*Prodigal Son.

ITALIAN OPERA, DRURY LANE. Mlle. Nilsson appeared on Tuesday night as the heroine in Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor." A most brilliant audience had crowded the theatre, and the entry of the

accomplished artist was the signal for a perfect furor of applause. The execution of the "Regnava nel silenzio," was received with most enthusiastic plaudits, the sparkling brilliancy of the last movement in particular being wonderfully effective. The exquisite refinement and abandon displayed in the love scenes with *Edgardo* could not be surpassed; and the excited passion of the scene when the marriage contract is signed—in the "Chi mi frena"—especially when she tore the bridal wreath from her hair and dashed it on the ground, was truly sublime. In the "Alfin son tua" and the following music Mlle. Nilsson displayed the greatest histrionic power, no less than the most extraordinary vocal skill, and all in the best taste and with most appropriate expression. Her concluding notes were followed by long continued bursts of applause and by enthusiastic recalls. Mlle. Nilsson's first impersonation of the season was quite equal to her former triumphs.

Last night, the two novelties which have been postponed twice through the indisposition of Sig. Gassier, were produced to a most critical audience. Fragments of the music of Weber's "Abu Hassan" have been familiar to most, but few would imagine the charming freshness of the operetta in its entirety, or the admirable symmetry displayed throughout both in detail and as a whole. The principal parts were *Fatima*, Mme. Monbelli; *Hassan*, Mme. Trebelli-Bettini; *Omar*, Signor Castelli; and *The Caliph*, Signor Raguer. The singing of the ladies was most charming. Mme. Monbelli progresses steadily in dramatic power, and this is now the only thing needed to place her on a level with our very best artists. She was enthusiastically applauded. Mme. Trebelli gave her best interpretation to the lovely music allotted her, and produced such an effect in one song, that she was compelled to repeat the first movement. This air "Darò una festa" is the gem of the work, but all is beautiful and appropriate. Signor Castelli made the most of his part without overstepping the limits of good taste.

Of the "Oca del Cairo" we may observe shortly that if it be not literally an opera by Mozart, all the music is Mozart's and worthy of its composer. The plot is of the slightest. The characters were allotted as follows: *Fabrizio*, Signor Gardoni; *Don Beltramo*, Signor Gassier; *Pasquale*, Signor Trevero; *Lo Schiavo*, Mr. Lyall; *Giocinta*, Mme. Corsi; *Oretta*, Mme. Sinico; and *Isabella*, Mlle. Pauline Lewitzky.

We are compelled to defer our notice of the piece, but a word or two on the debut of Mlle. Lewitzky is necessary. This young Russian lady is a pupil of M. Wartel—the instructor of Nilsson and Trebelli—and she possesses natural qualifications of the highest character; her voice is pure and capable of the most refined expression, her manner graceful and unaffected. Her training, doubtless, has been good, and she may fairly aspire to reach the highest eminence in lyrical art. The reception was most cordial, and her charming singing of "Come il bacio" at once enlisted the sympathies of the audience. We can only further observe that, thanks to Signor Arditi, the music of "L'Oca" went exceedingly well, and that the production of the two operas reflects the greatest credit on all concerned.

COVENT GARDEN. On Saturday Mme. Patti made her first appearance for the season: the opera being "Il Barbiere." The selection of a part like *Susanna* for the *rentrée* of the charming singer needs no justification: her piquancy and prettiness in the role are beyond all description. Mme. Patti's appearance at the balcony was greeted with a storm of applause warmly repeated when she entered for the cavatina, "Una Voce," and sang with the old accustomed brilliancy, the roulades with which the air is embellished. Her voice is in excellent preservation; her manner spontaneous, fresh, and full of charm; her execution admirable. In the lesson scene she gave "O luce di quest' anima," and as an encore "Home, sweet home" simply and touchingly sung. Throughout the opera the applause sufficiently demonstrated the hold which the fair artist possesses on her audience. Signor Mario made his first appearance for two years, and was received in the kindly fashion of English audiences when an old favorite returns. His *Almaviva* is a known impersonation: the quietude and ease of his demeanor were again exhibited, and the infraction which time has made in his voice as cunningly disguised. Sig. Cotogni was the *Figaro*—a better assumption than before, and well applauded after the "Largo al factotum." Sig. Ciampi, Sig. Tagliafico, and Mlle. Beaumeister made up the cast. The conducting of Sig. Vianesi was, as usual, extremely careful.

Monday was a field night. "Don Giovanni" with the *Donna Anna* of Mlle. Tietjens and the *Zerlina* of Mlle. Patti could not fail to draw a good house. The piquancy of the village maiden, the grandeur of the outraged lady are well known presentations; on this

occasion they compensated for the faults in the rest of the cast; for Signor Graziani was too boorish a *Don*, Herr Wachtel's memory failed him in the part of *Don Ottavio*, and the *Leporello* of Signor Ciampi was dull. Indeed unreserved praise can only be accorded to the two principal ladies and to Signor Tagliafico as *Masetto*. Thanks to his support of Mme. Patti, the "Batti batti," was encored. A similar compliment was paid to "Vedrai carino." Signor Vianesi's conducting was careful, and in some respects saved an indifferent performance.

The *rentrée* of Mme. Lucca on Tuesday was another event interesting to the subscribers. After an absence of two years she comes back to us with nothing of her art or popularity impaired. Her singing exhibits the same merits and the same shortcomings as before. Nought is altered. The opera selected was "Faust," which gave occasion for Mme. Lucca's strong individuality in acting *Margaret*. It is a conception with which Goethe's idealism has little or nothing to do. She puts Italian blood into Gretchen's veins as well as the Italian language into her mouth. It is a *Margaret* of force and passion, with impulses easily stirred to sin. Nevertheless in many respects it is a fine rendering—especially towards the latter part of the opera, where all is a turmoil of penitence and outraged love. The plaudits which followed all the points told forcibly of the sympathy between artists and hearers. The "Jewel Song" was naturally encored. Mlle. Scalchi was an effective *Siebel*, obtaining a *bis* for "Le parole d'amor." Signor Mario's *Faust* was as polished as ever: his voice gave way somewhat in the middle of the opera, but recovered itself towards the end; his phrasing, we need scarcely add, was wonderfully artistic. M. Petit's picturesque demon is well known; so also Signor Graziani's *Valentine*, Signor Tagliafico's *Wagner* and Mlle. Anese's *Martha*. The Prince of Wales attended the opera this night. On Thursday Mme. Patti appeared as *Amina* in "La Sonnambula."—*Orchestra*, May 13.

LEIPSIK. A correspondent of the *Athenæum* writes: "Friday the 18th ult., being a solemn fast in Saxony, Prof. Riedel's choir treated us to Beethoven's 'Missa Solemnis' at S. Thomas's, the solo parts being taken by Mmes. Otto V. Alvsleben (soprano) and Krebs-Michaësi (alto), both of Dresden, Herr V. Melden (bass), of Weimar, and Herr Rebling (tenor), of our theatre. Herr Ferdinand David undertook the violin obbligato and Herr Passier played the organ. Were I to pass an opinion on the composition itself and its almost insuperable difficulties, I should but have to repeat what you said recently on the occasion of the production of the 'Missa' by Mr. Barnby's choir; but, though comparisons are odious, I have no doubt that had you listened to Prof. Riedel's choir, you would have had more reason to be satisfied; for, besides engaging such eminent performers for the soli, Prof. Riedel had the advantage over the English conductor by his producing the 'Missa' for the fifth time; and his choir has enjoyed such an excellent training that the performance was every way creditable both to the members and the conductor. *Lohengrin* has just been revived on our stage, and has been vociferously applauded, notwithstanding the scurrilous abuse Wagner last year heaped on this native town and its music. Is not that magnanimous and impartial? Look, on the other hand, at Berlin, where the 'Meistersänger' has just been brought out! It appears from the reports that a regularly organized clique of partisans for Wagner, chiefly composed of members of the highest aristocracy, tried to procure a triumph for him. But their efforts only provoked the opposition to be all the fiercer in their counter-demonstration, and with the exception of two songs of Walther and a brief passage in the third act, the opera was unequivocally and most decidedly declined,—the milder term for rejected. Our witty, pungent friend *Kladderatsch* of last Sunday makes his famous 'Müller' say to 'Schulze,' 'Is not that Wagner a great man? he not only composes the music, but his own text too. That is like Zelter and Goethe in one person.' And Schulze maliciously replies, 'That is to say, as if Zelter had composed the text and Goethe the music.'

GEWANDHAUS CONCERTS. The *Signale* gives a list of all the works performed in the 20 subscription concerts, besides the two for the orchestral benefit fund, of the past season, as follows:

Symphonies. Beethoven: Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9. Mozart: G minor, and "Jupiter." Haydn: "Oxford" Symphony. Schumann: Nos. 1, 2, and 4. Gade: No. 3. Schubert: in C major. One each by Grimm (in Canon form), by Vierling, and by Dietrich.

Overtures. Beethoven: Leonore, No. 3; Coriolan. Cherubini: Medea, Abencerages, Anacreon. Weber: Euryanthe, Oberon, Freyschütz. Schumann: Manfred, Genoveva. Mendelssohn: "Be-calmed at Sea, &c." Gluck: Iphigenia in Aulis. Mozart: "Magic Flute." Spohr: Jessonda. Gade: "In the Highlands." Reinecke: "Dame Kobold." Volkmann: Fest-Ouverture. Bennett: Paradise and Peri. Berlioz: to "The Roman Carnival."

Other Orchestral Pieces. Bach: Suite in D. Lachner: Suites No. 2 and No. 5. Mendelssohn: Octet (by all the strings).

Concertos for Violin. Viotti: in A minor. David: No. 5. Mendelssohn.

Concertos, &c., for Piano. Beethoven: in E flat (twice); Choral Fantasia. Chopin: Allegro de Concert. Reinecke: in F-sharp minor. Schumann: Concertstück, Concerto in A minor. Saint-Saëns. Mendelssohn: G minor. Hummel: B minor.

Concertos for Violoncello: by Schumann; by Golttermann.—*For Flute:* Concertino by Lobe.

Concertos &c., for several Instruments. Mozart: Serenade for wind instruments; Sinfonie Concertante for violin and viola. Bach: Concerto for two pianos. Reinecke: *Improvisata*, for two pianos. Spohr: Adagio and Rondo for two violins. Kalliwoda: Variations for two violins.

Smaller Solo Pieces. 1) *For Pianoforte:* Chopin: Notturmes in C-sharp minor and F-sharp major. Mendelssohn: Gondellied; Rondo capriccioso. Schumann: Humoreske; Skizze (for pedal piano); Fantasie stück ("Des Abends"). Mozart: Rondo in A minor; Fantasia in F minor. Beethoven: Dervish Chorus (transcription). Weber: Rondo from Sonata in C. Scarlatti: Presto. Rubinstein: Etude. Gluck: Chorus and Dance of Scythians from Iphigenia in Tauris (transcription). Alkan: Lied. Bach: Toccata.

2) *For Violin.* David: Andante and Scherzo Capriccioso; Variations on a theme by Mozart. Bach: Präludium. Beethoven: Romanza in F. Ernst: Hungarian Songs. Spohr: Adagio. Singer: Rhapsodie Hongroise.—3) *For Violoncello.* Bach: Air, Gavotte.—4) *For Clarinet.* Mozart: Adagio.—5) *For Horn.* F. Strauss: Romanza.

Choruses, &c., with and without Orchestra. Brahms: two female choruses with two horns and harp. Cherubini: *Requiem aeternam* (from the Requiem in C). Handel: Ode to St. Cecilia. Hiller: two Songs for Soprano solo and male chorus. Mendelssohn: Music to "Athalia"; and to "Antigone." Reinecke: two Songs in Canon style for female chorus. Mozart: Chorus: "O Isis." Richter: Kyrie and Gloria from his *Missa Solennis*. Weber: Scene from Euryanthe. Schubert: Miriam's Song of Triumph.

Vocal Solos with Orchestra. Bach: Air: "My heart ever faithful." Bruch: "The Priestess of Isis in Rome." Cherubini: "Ego to amo." Boieldieu: Aria from "Jean de Paris." Graun: Aria from "Der Tod Jesu." Gluck: Aria from "Orpheus." Donizetti: Air from "La Favorita." Haydn: Airs from "Creation" and "Seasons." Handel: Arias from "Rinaldo," "Judas Maccabæus," "Susanna" (2), and "Acis and Galathea." Mozart: Arias from "Don Juan" (2), "Figaro," Aria with violin obbligato and Concert Aria. Mendelssohn: Arias from Elijah and St. Paul. Halevy: Air from "Les Mousquetaires." Rossini: Airs from "Tancredi," "Donna del Lago," and "Barber of Seville." Weber: two arias from "Euryanthe." Spontini: Aria from "La Vestale." Winter: Air from "The interrupted Sacrifice."

Songs with Piano Accompaniment: 4 by Schumann; 2 by Brahms; Beethoven's *Liederkreis*; one each by Schubert, Walter, Kirschner, Heuchemer, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Franz, Grädener, Josephson, Lindblad.

Of the above named works, twelve were heard in the Gewandhaus for the first time.

The different composers were represented as follows: Schumann 16 times; Mozart 15 times; Beethoven, 14 times; Mendelssohn 12 times; Bach 7 times; Cherubini 5 times; Reinecke 4 times; Rossini, Schubert, Spohr, Brahms, Chopin, Gluck, David and Haydn, 3 times each; Lachner, Gade and Hiller, each twice; Lindblad, Josephson, Donizetti, Bruch, Kalliwoda, Dietrich, Halevy, Rubinstein, Viotti, Boieldieu, Saint-Saëns, Walter, Paladilhe, Alkan, Vierling, Graun, Spontini, Ernst, Scarlatti, Volkmann, Singer, Hummel, Heuchemer, Kirschner, Golttermann, Richter, Grimm, Lobe, Strauss, Grädener, Bennett, Winter, Berlioz, Franz, once each.

AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.—The artists engaged for the Musical Festival at Whitsuntide are Mlle. Orgéni, Mme. Joachim, Herr Vogl (from Munich), Herr Bletzacher (from Hanover), and, last, not least, Herr Joachim. The programme is settled as follows:—First day: *Sinfonia Eroica* and *Missa Solennis*, Beethoven (in the second work Herr Joachim will play the violin *obbligato* in the "Benedictus"). Second day: "Leonore" Overture—Beethoven; and *Deborah*—Handel. Third day: a miscellaneous concert, in which one of the pieces will be Beethoven's Violin Concerto, performed, of course, by Herr Joachim.

WEIMAR.—Compositions by Friedrich Kiel, Gustav Weber, Draseke, and J. S. Svenden, will occupy places in the programme of the approaching Beethoven Festival. Herr Nohl, moreover, will deliver a discourse on Beethoven: and Herr Porzes, one on the *Missa Solennis*. "Why?" asks the Berlin Echo. "A printed pamphlet would answer all the purpose."

PARIS.—At Mr. Charles Hallé's second pianoforte recital on the 23rd ult. there was a crowded audience, and the programme, including Beethoven's sonata in E flat and works by Bach, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Chopin, and Heller, was listened to with genuine satisfaction.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, JUNE 4, 1870.

English Opera.

The idea of Opera in the Boston Music Hall, instead of in a theatre, was hardly so inviting to the imagination of most music-lovers,—particularly so late in the Spring and after a protracted surfeit of musical excitements,—as to bring back the crowded audiences to which Mme. PAREPA-ROSA and her excellent troupe had been accustomed. The principal singers were the same, with only one change (and that for the better), as before. The orchestra and chorus were not quite so good,—or did not seem so good in that place; their efforts being commonly too harsh and overpowering. But there was a great deal of good music given, and in many respects well given, in the short season from the 16th to the 30th of May inclusive. At all events that must be called a rich fortnight, which gave us two performances of Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro," two of Weber's "Oberon" (never before heard in Boston), and one of "Don Giovanni;"—to say nothing of "Fra Diavolo" and "Martha." The other evenings were devoted to the "Trovatore," Wallace's "Maritana," and Balfe's "Rose of Castille" and "Bohemian Girl." That was a much stronger English Opera Company than we had known before, that could grapple confidently, and triumphantly, with such problems as "Oberon" and "Figaro;" and it is doubtless to their not shrinking from such high, unusual tasks, that the Parepa-Rosa troupe have mainly owed their remarkable success throughout the land.

Such aspirations, bravely persevered in, raise and strengthen the morale of an artistic organization, and give them new power over audiences. Had the faith of these singers failed them, had they yielded to the apprehension that these things were too difficult, or too good for the public,—in short, had they followed the common example of Opera-troupes, and even of Oratorio Societies, they would have had the common luck of such, awakening no new interest, and not winning the prestige which they have won mainly by their mastering of these two great works.

(This by the way, as a lesson to Choral Societies who think, but do not think with all their might, of mastering such tasks as Bach's Passion Music.)

The un-theatre-like place was certainly a drawback upon these last performances; though the experiment was interesting, and on the whole worked better than we had anticipated. The temporary scenerium was rather sightly and convenient; but the stage room so contracted in width and depth and height, so surrounded with unused space in the great high hall, and the actors perched so high above the audience on the floor, as to give it rather the appearance of a marionette stage peopled by colossal figures. The whole thing made a contradictory impression: a full corps of professional and powerful means cooped up within a frame of private theatricals. The actors seemed to have hardly elbow room enough sometimes; and the perspective in some scenes was oddly at fault, distant bridges, hills, &c., showing a strange fondness for the footlights. But there was a goodly variety of scenes, most of them picturesque and tasteful; and we were surprised to find how effective, even in that small space, so bustling and crowded a finale as that of *Fra Diavolo* could be made.

On the other hand, the voices came out far more clearly and sonorously than in the theatre. Mr. CASTLE's tenor never sounded quite so rich and pure and strong to us; and he has gained in style as well as ease of action. Miss ROSE HERSEE was natural and full of life and charm as ever, particularly as Zerlina in *Fra Diavolo*, singing delightfully always; nor has Mrs. SEGUIN lost aught of her charm of voice or person. The Lord and Lady Alleash of herself and husband were capital. Mr. CAMPBELL being ill, the part of Beppo, the more important of the two bandits, was cleverly filled by Mr. HOWELLS, who commonly plays the double-bass so finely in the orchestra.

PAREPA herself was in fine voice and spirits always, singing and acting admirably,—in *Martha*, in *Maritana*, in the *Trovatore*, in the second performance of the *Bohemian Girl*; but she was at her greatest in the three great operas by Mozart and Weber. Indeed of all the voices, but for the continued hoarseness of Mr. Campbell, we may say they sounded better than ever in a hall of so much resonance. And for the same reason, chorus and orchestra were often harsh and overpowering. These forces, used to full swing in theatres, needed to be subdued and toned down, placed so far forward as they were in such a hall. Of this desideratum the excellent conductor, Mr. CARL ROSA, was evidently as well aware as anybody; but in spite of all his efforts, the instruments would play always *forte*, and often carelessly and coarsely.

Decidedly the best performance as a whole,

this time as on their former visit, was that of *The Marriage of Figaro*. Figaro himself, to be sure, (Mr. Campbell), had to make the will serve for the deed in the matter of voice; but Parepa's Susanna, Miss Hersee's Countess, and the fascinating Cherubino of Mrs. Seguin, were almost all that one could wish, at least in point of singing; while Mr. LAWRENCE, as the Count, used his rich baritone artistically, acting not over-well, and Mr. NORDBLUM, the young Swedish tenor, as Don Basilio, improved his few opportunities to confirm the impression of the native power and sweetness of his voice and to show solid progress in his art. All went more smoothly, with more ease and unanimity, and even with more light and shade, in this difficult opera, taken as a whole than in most others, and it drew the fullest houses. One element we missed, which was a great part of the charm when this opera was given here by the Italians twelve years ago (see reminiscence on our first page), and that was the *recitativo*; so much talking often breaks the spell. Moreover, it was a pity that Figaro's hoarseness compelled him to omit, of all things, that first little air: *Se vuol ballare* (If the Count wants to dance, &c.), which gives the key-note as it were to the whole plot.

Of course there was great desire to witness for the first time Weber's fairy opera, *Oberon*. And, though the rendering, as a whole, was rather rough, particularly on the part of the orchestra, (which is indeed in some sense the principal and most suggestive part, and needs both fire and delicacy); though the scenic effects could hardly be much more than hinted, while the fairy folk were anything but *tiny* on so small a stage; yet the singing mostly was so good, and the music so delicious, so full of imaginative suggestion, so genial, characteristic, varied,—now heroic, now fairy-like, now gently but not deeply sentimental, now Oriental and barbaric, at times slightly comic and grotesque,—always original, always exciting to the fancy,—that few were disappointed.

The wonderful familiar Overture was heard with a new interest, because now its themes and motives were to be traced to their sources in the unfolding tale of knighthood and enchantment which it sums up by way of preface. Then came the chorus of elves and fairies (sopranos, altos, tenors) guarding the slumbers of the fairy king. A more delicate, exquisite bit of music does not exist; and it was simply murdered by loud singing and by coarse accompaniment. It should be soft as possible, yet it was all *forte* or almost *fortissimo*! The first air of the waking Oberon was well enough omitted. (See Dr. Peech's description of the opera on another page). The spoken dialogue, here and so often afterwards, while it explains the story, breaks the spell too rudely, for this kind of opera especially. But here and there we have some bits of recitative supplied by Weber's pupil, Benedict, accompanied with characteristic phrases from the instrumental parts. And now we have Rezia in the Vision (shown to Sir Huon sleeping); her short air was sung in a pure and noble style by Mme. Rosa, ending with a beautifully prolonged high note. The heroic element awakes with the picturesque knight, Sir Huon, (CASTLE), and the inspiring chorus of elves and genii, Oberon and Huon and his Squire Scherastin (LAWRENCE), sending the knight upon his mission (during which the trip to Bagdad is miraculously accomplished), with the alternating solos, went off quite effectively. The Oberon, to be sure, looked more like a stout Roman emperor than a fairy, nor was his speech or song suggestive of any fine remoteness from our every day street life. But Mr. Castle gave his music manfully, with clear, ringing voice, soaring triumphantly in the high strains. We regret that his

principal heroic air here was not the simpler and nobler one originally designed by Weber, and which appears still in the German editions ("Von Jugend auf," &c.), instead of that which he afterwards substituted as a travesty piece for Braham, and which surely sinks to a lower and more common atmosphere of music; but Mr. Campbell sang it wonderfully well.

We must not attempt, however, to go through the opera in detail. All the music was extremely interesting; most of all the third act, beginning with Puck's conjuration of the spirits to raise a storm, with the magnificent wildly descriptive accompaniment. This inevitably takes a strong hold on the imagination; the music does it, even with such scant supply of scenery. Miss WARREN filled the part of Puck agreeably, and rendered the recitative quite well. Then the short prayer of Huon, tenderly sung; and the great Scene and Aria "Ocean thou mighty monster," which was sung sublimely by Parepa, with the full power and splendor of her glorious voice, completely realizing all the graphic, grand suggestion of the music, with its successive moods of awe and mystery, of brightening hope, of sense of deliverance and joy. It is after the model of the Scene in *Freyshütz*, and, as in that, the rapturous finale has already figured as the most brilliant portion of the Overture. The rising of the sun floods the whole harmony with light (full chord of C, as at "And there was light" in Haydn's *Creation*). The pretty episode of the "Mermaid's Song," that limpid, graceful and familiar strain (well sung from without), and the beautiful chorus of Water Nymphs, close what was here made an Act by itself, full of grandeur and of fine imaginative charm without a single moment of commonplace.

Next to the "Ocean" Aria, perhaps the most perfect impression was produced by the little Trio or *Terzettino*, in the last Act, between Sir Huon, Fatima (Mrs. SEGGIN) and Scherastin, beginning: "And must I then dissemble?" This had to be repeated both nights. The Quartet at the end of the second Act, too; "Over the dark blue waters," with the stirring first Allegro of the Overture accompanying the cry "On board, then!" was finely sung and highly effective. Rezia's rapturous melody in the preceding scene, soaring above the sombre, heavy chorus of the Slaves and the retiring Harem guard, was one of the brilliant moments.

To the pretty part of Fatima fall some melodies of a pensive and romantic character, not precisely sentimental, and not warm or deep in feeling, but shadowy suggestions rather of that, which Mrs. Seguin sang with purity and sweetness. This was combined with archness and naive gayety in the slightly humorous duet with Scherastin: "On the banks of sweet Garonne," where both sang finely. The small part for Mr. LAWRENCE was eked out by a Song, at the opening of the fourth act: "Where love is there is home," said to have been adapted by Mr. Howard Glover from something in one of Weber's Sonatas. It was capitally well sung and greatly applauded; but it sounds, the opening at least, for all the world like a commonplace English ballad, though the latter part is more like Weber. Weber, however, is one of the melodists whom English ballad writers have been prone to (feebly) imitate.

On the whole this music, with all the faults of omission and of commission, was exceedingly well relished; and more so on the repetition, when the obstreperous forces were somewhat toned down, and the whole thing went smoother. The music, with all its magic and its delicacy of sentiment, is mostly (as a painter friend said to us) "dry light;" these tones have no "tear" in them, as they say of singers. How could it be otherwise with such a subject, and with such creatures of the air for the *dramatis personæ*? Mozart, though, would have humanized them in spite of himself, and made them sing in warm heart strains. There is true chivalric ardor, and something like manly passion, in the music of Sir Huon.

Don Giovanni (for the first and only time by the Parepa troupe in Boston) closed the season on Monday evening. With many shortcomings and much curtailment, it was a more spirited and telling performance of the great work than we could have expected. The principal characters (excepting Leporello, which it was self-sacrifice in Mr. Campbell to attempt at all) were really well filled. Parepa's Donna Anna was superb. She omitted, to be sure, the great dramatic recitative and Aria: "*Or sai chi l'onore*," doubtless on account of the bad English text, which, to say truth, is a great drawback throughout this opera; (none but the Italian syllables ring rightly in the final statue scene for instance). On the other hand she did sing the often omitted Letter Air: "*Non mi dir*," and all felt it to be one of her finest, highest efforts. Miss Worden made an uncommonly good Elvira; and of course Rose Hersee was

as pretty a little Zerlina, and as tuneful, tender and naive as one could wish. Mr. Lawrence really raised himself in our estimation by his singing and his acting as the seductive Don. Mr. Nordblom made "*Il mio tesoro*" uncommonly impressive. Mr. Seguin's Musetto, too, was good. The Statue, "*l'uom di sasso*," was by no means ponderous or solid, and indeed ludicrously feeble. The Quartet, Trio of Maskers, and even the intricate Sestet, went well and made their mark. And the vocal ensemble was spirited enough, and the principal parts in it so pronounced and individual, as for a while to almost cover up the poverty of the stage in the Ball scene.

The troupe have left us, to sing *Figaro* five successive nights in as many places, Worcester, Providence, &c.—(is not that a sign of progress!)—and then they take their farewell in New York, and for the time disperse. Mme. Rosa and her husband will return to her home in England for some months of rest; but they will no doubt be warmly welcomed back here before another Spring.

Handel and Haydn Society.

The annual meeting of this society was held in Bumstead Hall last evening. The president, Dr. J. Baxter Upham, presented his annual report, which was duly accepted. In opening he referred to the deficiency in the funds of the society and said that the treasurer had been authorized to negotiate a temporary loan to meet the immediate wants of the society, while some of the creditors had expressed a willingness to allow their bills to remain unpaid for the present. Thirty-five new members have been admitted during the year, four have resigned and four have been honorably discharged. In the same time ninety-one have been suspended under the new article of the by-laws, proposed at the last annual meeting and adopted last September, of which number seven were subsequently reinstated, for reasons that were deemed sufficient. Two members of the society have deceased during the year. The number of rehearsals was 29; average attendance, 306; a calculation shows that the attendance of gentlemen has been better than that of the lady members. The number of public performances has been fewer than usual, and was only four besides the assistance rendered at the Peace Jubilee and at the celebration of the Mercantile Library Association.

He alluded to the attention given to Bach's Passion Music, and said that the reasons for its non-performance were many and sufficient; an orchestra sufficient in the double functions demanded could not be obtained. It is hoped that it may yet be produced. The annals of the society will probably be ready for publication during the coming year. He suggested that it might be well to advance the standard of requirement in the examination of candidates for admission; complimented the Salem Oratorio Association, and in conclusion referred in terms of eulogy to the invaluable aid and coöperation of their excellent conductor, Carl Zerrahn, to the accompanist, Mr. Parker, and to Mr. O. J. Faxon, who retires from the vice-presidency of the association, after filling that office for eleven years. The coming year will furnish an opportunity for the second of the regular series of triennial festivals, so happily inaugurated two years since. On motion of Mr. James Sharpe, a resolution complimentary to Mr. Faxon was afterwards passed by the society.

The librarian reported very few changes in the condition of the library during the year. No books were purchased during the year, but 650 copies of Bach's Passion Music were added, which were ordered last year. The treasurer's report showed the expenses for the year were \$5493 37; receipts, \$5098 13; balance due the treasurer \$395 25. A large amount of bills due lie over till another year. The total deficit for the year was about \$2000. The reports were accepted.

Attention having been called by a member of the society to the reports circulating in the newspapers concerning a visit of the society to New York city next month to attend the Beethoven celebration, Mr. Barnes informed the society that they were all unauthorized, but that an agent from New York had visited him and offered to pay all the expenses of five hundred members of the Handel and Haydn Society to New York and return, if they could be prevailed upon to attend. A meeting of the society is to be held this evening to consider the matter.

The following named gentlemen were elected officers for this year:

President, Dr. J. Baxter Upham; Vice-President, S. Lothrop Thorndike; Secretary, Loring B. Barnes; Treasurer, Geo. W. Palmer; Librarian, George H. Chickering; Directors, George Fisher, Samuel Jennison, Levi W. Johnson, A. Parker Brown, Edward Faxon, T. Frank Reed, Charles H. Johnson, W. O. Perkins.

A vote of thanks was passed to the retiring directors, after which the society adjourned.—*Advertiser*, 31st.

Choral Societies in New York.

(From the Evening Post, May 5.)

The musical societies in this city are about bringing their labors to a close for the present season. The record for the past few months has not been wholly satisfactory. As the metropolis of America, New York claims to take the lead in art as well as in wealth and commerce, but, disguise the fact as we may, this claim, as far as music is concerned, is quite unfounded. In the higher classes of vocal music Boston is ahead of us, while London is so far in advance that there is no comparison.

We have already in these columns explained the reason of this lack of precedence in choral singing in this city. It lies in the fact that we have too many choral societies, and that they are actuated by jealousies towards each other. They are, moreover, managed too much in the interest of individuals. It is but right that a conductor or leader should be the prominent man in the society; but it is not right that he should be the centre of a clique who pit him against all other conductors.

The managers and directors of the different musical societies in this city know perfectly well that their organizations are maintained only with the greatest difficulty, and that available men of influence are shy of accepting the offices of president or treasurer. To the public the moribund condition of these societies is evidenced by the occasional concerts they give, and which are attended chiefly by the friends of the performers and others who never pay for a ticket. Under these circumstances the recent performance of the "Elijah" by the Harmonic Society was deserving of far more credit than it received; for it showed a commendable desire to prove the vitality of the society even at the risk of adverse criticism. Meritorious as were many points in that performance, both conductors and members are well aware that it was not a success.

Some years ago the Harmonic Society was a flourishing, leading institution of its kind. From its loins sprang the Mendelssohn Union, and from the latter came the Berge Choral Union. These three societies include talent and ability; but it is absurd to suppose that either of them is as good as a united society combining all their powers would be.

The dispersion of vocal powers into a variety of channels is certainly to be regretted. It is not for us to inquire into or to state the reasons from which we think all the painful results of failure arise to societies generally. We can only lament that they exist. Their condition is such that whenever they appear in public their efforts are plainly indicative of a great want of preparation, succeeded, of course, by inefficient performances. Undoubtedly the bane of the whole thing lies in the unfortunate existence of a multitude of small societies, presided over by music teachers whose personal and professional interests are the first consideration, and who, influenced by mere amiable friendship, seek to perpetuate the person rather than the art whose interests they are supposed to advocate. It is this division of sentiment and feeling usurps the place of united purpose and action, and has hitherto rendered abortive every attempt to create a large and efficient chorus in this city.

THE CHURCH MUSIC ASSOCIATION.

Of the concerts of this society we have already had occasion to speak in high terms; and at the present writing it would appear that to this society alone are we to look to for the stability and grandeur of choral effects in which our other societies are wanting. This society was started upon a basis possessing many attributes of success. It is now the largest vocal society in the city. Supported by from eighty to one hundred subscribers of \$100 each, there has been no lack of funds for carrying through the intentions of its promoters with a generous hand. The choruses have been sung by its associate members to the number of nearly three hundred, accompanied by an orchestra of upwards of seventy performers. Two performances have already been given to the largest audiences ever witnessed in any concert room in this city. The chorus itself, composed of some of our people moving in easy and refined circumstances, and of professional artists who enter upon a general footing, is presided over by one who has proved himself to be a conductor of consummate power and influence in the control of large masses of vocal and instrumental performers. Dr. James Pech has brought his orchestra and chorus, with comparatively few rehearsals, to a very finished point of execution. It is, of course, a matter of time to secure all the variety of light and shadow which it is evidently his desire and purpose to obtain. From the rapid progress of the society towards perfection, the executive committee must have been entirely freed from conflicting feeling and opinion; for their action has been both positive and certain, and everything they have at-

tempted has been carried through with success. The chorus under their care and protection has from the beginning uninterruptedly increased in numbers, and is gracefully submitting to the instructions and critical requirements of their conductor.

The subscription list for the second season is already open, and several thousand dollars promised. Several interesting works for orchestra and chorus are to be promptly procured from Europe. The chorus, which during the past season has passed through judicious weeding, will, we understand, during the coming summer and fall months be further pruned. The executive committee are evidently impressed with the fact that, if excellent performances are to be given the attendance at rehearsals must also continue to be certain and regular.

The results of the first season of the Church Music Association have proved highly satisfactory, and the interests of musical art will undoubtedly be benefited. To our young people such an association is invaluable in the training and education of the amateurs of the city, and especially to those who, to use the words of Dr. Pech in his admirable synopsis of the concerts, need to be told "that ability to sing accurately a quartet or chorus is of far higher value than capacity to execute the most brilliant aria."

The next and last concert will take place at Steinway Hall, Wednesday, May 18, with an orchestra and chorus of about three hundred. It will undoubtedly be as successful as the former ones.

There was at the initiation of the plan on which the Church Music Association is based a tendency to exclusiveness, which gave offence to many musical amateurs; but this exclusiveness was more fancied than real. The Church Music Association and its promoters have enemies who are disposed to exaggerate whatever faults may exist in its organization.

THE MADRIGAL MANIA.

Some of the pleasantest chorus music which has yet been heard in this city has been provided by the madrigal societies, one of which gives a concert at Steinway Hall to-night. The music of madrigals is, of course, of varying merit, but a few of those which have lately been heard in public have caught the popular ear as thoroughly as much of what is commonly called popular music. The harmonized melody "Dorothy," though not, strictly speaking, a madrigal, is always a winning carol at madrigal concerts.

It would be impossible to praise too highly the efforts of those ladies and gentlemen who have met together to rehearse these madrigals, and are now singing them in public for a most worthy charity. Love of art and true benevolence are happily combined, and would disarm the shafts of criticism even if the performance were lacking in completeness.

There are two madrigal societies in this city, and it is a notable fact that neither of them has any definite name. The ladies and gentlemen who will sing to-night can only be designated as those trained by Dr. Brown. The other society has met a decided loss in the death of its lamented president, Mr. S. Weir Roosevelt; but we understand that its organization will be continued, and that in the fullness of time concerts will be given. We shall be glad to chronicle the union of these two associations into one vigorous and healthy musical society.

MINOR ORGANIZATIONS.

Among the numerous musical organizations of the city is the Mendelssohn Glee Club, which sang some German songs at the Alide Topp benefit on Tuesday night. This society has devoted great care to the technicalities of male voice singing. Of the Berge Choral Union we should like to hear something more. It modestly keeps itself in the background. The Mendelssohn Union is so very quiet that it may be said of it as of a scriptural personage, "It has gone on a journey, peradventure it sleepeth." The Mendelssohn is a large society, and ought not to be classed among minor organizations; but its inactivity of late renders the general public in doubt as to whether it yet exists. It has in Mr. Thomas a leader of no ordinary capacity. The Harmonic Society has in Mr. Ritter a conductor of unusual musical erudition. We presume that both of these societies will enter the field next season with renewed vigor; and with their performances and those of the Church Music Association choral music will probably be better represented here next winter than last. We should be happy to hear that the different societies had united in one grand organization, but of that we fear there is no hope.

Last month five musical instruments were unearthed at Pompeii. They are in excellent state of preservation, and somewhat like our clarinet; the lower half of the instrument is silver, the upper half and mouthpiece are ivory.

Special Notices.

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF THE
LATEST MUSIC.

Published by Oliver Ditson & Co.

Vocal, with Piano Accompaniment.

Bright Star of Night. 4. Eb to c. Spohr. 30
For Baritone or Contralto. Of a religious character.

"Bright star of night shining resplendent in the deep blue heaven.
How oft when sleep to weariness is given."

Six o'clock P. M. 3. F to f. Alexander. 30

A cheerful Allegro Moderato movement in 6-8 time.

"The workshops open wide their doors
At six o'clock P. M.
And workmen issue forth by scores
At six o'clock P. M."

Are you coming, Father, coming? 2. Ab to e flat. Turner. 30

"Are you coming, father! coming
Homeward, on the ocean blue?
I alone am watching, waiting,
With a 'welcome home' for you."

Can silence whisper aught to thee? 3. G to f sharp. Smith. 30

Graduate's Song and Chorus. Bb to e flat. Pabst. 30
"This night is one of mingled joy and pain.
One that shall never from our memories die."

A beautiful piece for the closing day of High and Normal Schools.

Instrumental.

Flur und Hain. (Wood and Field). Three Idyllen. Op. 273. Jungman. 35

No. 1. Allegretto in G. 2.

No. 2. Allegretto in C. 3.

No. 3. Moderato in E. 4.

These little pieces are each very graceful and melodious.

Waldmarchen. (Forest Stories). Three Tonopictures. Op. 224. Jungman. 40

No. 1. The Sprightly Brook. 3. G.

No. 2. The Lonely Chapel. 4. Ab.

Its religious theme is interestingly carried through its varied forms.

No. 3. Forest Legend. 4. Eb.

The imagination involuntarily pictures its own story of the wild-wood on listening to the horn-like passages.

Gov. Andrew's Grand March. 3. G. Bond. 40
With an excellent lithograph of the lamented Governor. Played by Bond's Band on "Decoration Day."

The Shepherd Boy. 3. G. Wilson. 50
A summer Idyll, with a lithograph of the boy piping his pastoral strain.

Charleston Galop. 3. Ab. Miss Crawford.
A successful effort of the young author whose striking features are portrayed on the title.

Illusion Polka. 3. D. Heyman. 30
Easy and harmonious, with a good accented melody.

Farewell Polonaise. 3. Ab. Heyman. 35
Arranged from motives by Gumbert.

Anglia Polka. 3. Eb. Prescott. 50
Composed on the passage from Glasgow to New York, with an engraving of the steamer.

The Guardsman. March Militaire. 3. C. Disbecker. 50

Bell Chimes. Nocturne. 4. Ab. Knight. 40
A theme in the Barcarolle movement with chiming arpeggios in each measure.

Sleep Well. 4. Db. Op. 22. Wilson. 60
A quiet Dream Song in cantabile style.

Books.

EHLERT'S LETTERS ON MUSIC. Translated by Fanny Raymond Ritter. Cloth, 1.75

These entertaining letters to a Lady are not filled with technicalities, but are calculated to interest as well as instruct. They have met with a large circulation and extended success in Germany.

WINNER'S NEW SCHOOL FOR THE CABINET ORGAN. 75

Designed to aid those who seek to learn without a teacher, containing also a large number of the popular melodies of the day.

ABBREVIATIONS.—Degrees of difficulty are marked from 1 to 7. The key is marked with a capital letter, as C, B flat, &c. A small Roman letter marks the highest note, if on the staff, an italic letter the highest note, if above the staff.

MUSIC BY MAIL.—Music is sent by mail, the expense being two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof, (about one cent for an ordinary piece of music). Persons at a distance will find the conveyance a saving of time and expense in obtaining supplies. Books can also be sent at double these rates.

